

## Report on Dynamiting

### BOATS DISTRIBUTION (Dar es Salaam area)

There are currently around 6 boats operating from the Ferry, another 4 from Kigamboni site and a couple from Msasani..

These boats are permanent dynamiters, they move up and down the Dar es Salaam coast following fish feeds.

There is another couple operating from Kunduchi and several in Kimbiji as well.

The boats used are small wooden boats “ngwandas or mtumbwi” powered by 15 / 20 HP motors.

They operate close by other boats, leisure boats, or close in shore, right in front of the Sea Cliff Hotel, Lodges or in between the moored Ships, thus giving an idea that they have no fear of being caught.

### EQUIPMENT

The equipment on these boats normally consists of:

#### ***Diving Gear:***

4 or 5 diving cylinders for 2 divers plus diving gear, masks, snorkels, fins, etc..

This gear is essential especially for blowing up pelagic fish such as Tuna since the majority of the fish sink once they have been dynamited,

#### ***“Keep Nets”***

Which are used for loading large amounts of fish under water, then are pulled up to the boat.

#### ***“Buoys”***

These “Keep Nets” are connected to buoys in order to avoid the “keep nets” from sinking from the weight of the fish collected

#### ***“Dynamite”***

and of course the dynamite.

### METHODS

There are two methods used in dynamiting:: reef dynamiting and dynamiting of school fish such as pelagic fish

#### ***Dynamiting of school fish and pelagic fish***

It is used in general when the pelagic fish are chasing bait on the surface, (such as Tuna do).

#### ***“The crew”***

The crew consists of normally 4 people (sometime 5) on a boat; one is the fish spotter and dynamite thrower

2 Guys are divers with tanks; their job is to pick up fish

And one guy is the skipper, he drives the boat and helps load up fish.

The “*Spotter*” stands at the front of the boat, most of the time by holding a rope for balance and he directs the skipper towards the surface feeding fish.

The Skipper "Driver": take the boat to the school of surface feeding fish under the directions of the "Spotter"

The "Two Divers", once the fish has been located by the "spotter", keep themselves ready to go in the water.

The "Spotter" then lights the dynamite with a very short fuse and quickly throws it into the centre of the surface feeding fish.

As soon as the blast goes off, the "two divers" jump in to start recovering the Tuna, (since they sink very quickly) and any other fish they find around after the blast..

Meanwhile a net is lowered into the water, so "the divers" can load the fish underwater into the net, saving time.

Once the divers pick up as many fish as they can (many are lost because they sink too deep) the fish are pulled up, loaded on the boat and the process is repeated on the next school of fish and it can take **as little as 15 mins** between blasts.

If there are **NO** feeds of fish to target, then they just wait (while drifting) and if the day is very quiet, then they switch over to reef dynamiting.

## REPERCUSSIONS

This method is very destructive to the fish shoals (schools) since only 20% of the fish blasted are collected and the majority is lost.

When a single boat comes in with 50 to 100 pieces Tuna (small) or 30 to 50 (big ones) you can imagine how many fish are killed and damaged as well as the bait these fish are feeding on (usually sardines)

The shoals of fish which would normally stay in a specific area according to the seasonal patterns and migratory routes are immediately trimmed down, as well as the baits, which on its own would attract the predators.

The surviving pelagic fish, being heavily harassed by continuous blasts (in the water blasts and sounds travel for miles), do not hold any more in the area and move away very fast in search of better feeding grounds, thus damaging in general the fishing of the other local fishermen and literally distorting the seasonal patterns.

Furthermore, the surviving pelagic fish become extremely weary and become almost unapproachable for any other local fishermen, thus ruining their catches and daily lively hood, maybe pushing them, to also start the blasting technique, being the only fast and easy way to catch these fish.

Logically this cannot be sustained for long and already many local fishermen are complaining about poor catches, the fish not feeding and in general the fishing has drastically reduced along the Tanzanian coast where these practices are in use.

The second method of dynamiting is when the fishermen target reef fish in shallow waters (5 to 20 meters deep). This method mainly involves divers swimming ahead of the boat looking for reef fish schools, when fish are located, the diver indicates to the boat the location of the fish and then

they throw the dynamite, with a longer fuse, so it detonates deeper near the bottom, blowing up the fish and the coral formation .

The fish are then collected easily since the water is shallow and reef fish frequently float up to the surface unlike pelagic fish.

This method is much more effective and probably about 60 -70 % of the fish are killed and collected.

Reef dynamiting is very destructive as well since it destroys coral formations and future fish habitat and nursery grounds. Reef fish such as Rock cod, Snappers, Parrotfish, Kole Kole (Trevally) are easily recognizable when they have been dynamited since their backbones are broken from the pressure of the blast and their insides are ruptured as well.

Tuna and other surface fish are more difficult to be recognized if they have been dynamited, since the pressure of a surface blast is much less, the meat is much more bloody than usual and it separated from the bone, plus the stomach are also slightly ruptured

### OFFLOADING CATCH AND SELLING IT

Most of the fish from dynamite boats are offloaded at the main Ferry fish market near the Swimming Club on the beach or at Kigamboni where a lot of the fishing boats park.

The fish are sold on the beach to fish buyers (***Middle men***) for a cheaper price than normal fish

These “***Middle men***” then take the fish and sell it at the other markets such as Tandika, Magomeni, Mwananyamala and Tandala.

A few are sold at the main fish market as well but normally the next day.

### AREAS

The main areas where the dynamiting occurs (for Tuna, etc), are all quite close to the coast, from Ras Ndege to Outer Sinda, the **Ship Mooring** down to Bongoyo, Mbudya Patches and Fungu Yasin.

Another area is opposite Raskutani at Fungu Miza Reef and off Kimbiji.

When the Tuna are not around, these boats move closer inshore and start blowing up the reef.

### PROBLEMS

These dynamite boats do not seem to be worried about other local fishing boats, sport-fishing boats, leisure boats or big ships and they frequently blast right next to other boats moving them away from the area if they hanging near to a feed..

These people are dangerous and frequently threaten other local fishermen, to keep them quite; they also threaten and have been known to throw dynamite at sport-fishing boats to chase them away from fish feeds.

### OFFICERS

It is common knowledge at the fish market the Relevant **Officers** leave the dynamite people alone when they come in with their catches. Officers have been seen to accept fish and money as bribes from dynamiters so they can offload their catch without any worries.

Patrol Boats can never seem to catch these dynamiters even though they are blasting away blatantly close to port in front dozens of local fishing boats and ships.

This suggests the Patrol Officers themselves, or individuals among them, are friends of these dynamiters and have an interest to warn them every time a patrol goes out which is very easy now, since all the boats have cellular phones and they are within phone range, close to shore.

As soon as a patrol heads back to port the dynamiters head out and resume their activities.

When the military conducts patrols for dynamiting here in Dar, they still rely on the same Officers to take them out plus the patrols always leave from the port, so the dynamiters are informed by

either their friends in port, that a patrol has gone out or by their associates within the Officers, so they are almost never caught.

When dynamiters are caught, they are out on bail within a day and back to their activities, since their associates can pay the small fines or they bribe their way out, of the judiciary system.

Often Authorities have been informed by boaters, of dynamiting activities and they say they will send a patrol out straight away and frequently they will inform you just after, that they have apprehended the dynamiters, but **this is often not true**, and no patrol boat or any operation has been truly carried out since the same dynamiters are still being observed during that whole time going about their business till evening.

This indicates that the majority of the Authorities as well are being fooled by their officers.

### OTHER PROBLEMS

Due to constant harassment, the fish do not stay around long and move out at an area, very quickly, so that even their seasonal patterns are changed.

The fish become increasingly boat shy and difficult to hook so normal local and net fishermen cannot catch them, this in turn, turns more fishermen towards trying dynamiting since they can see these people are making money easily and without any repercussions from the Government.

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The possible solutions, to try and catch these dynamite fishermen and stop them are:.

1) Change the judiciary system (sentences, fines, evidence need, etc)

- Any person caught dynamiting should go straight to jail without possibility of bail or without possibility of paying a fine.

Stiffer jail sentences should be implemented

2) **Any boat** caught dynamiting should be seized and ***destroyed*** straight away, along with its **ENGINE**.

This would stop dynamiters getting back out there, should they bribe their way out of jail, court, etc and also stop their associates using the boat and engine for the same job.

3) **Fish buyers and dealers**, caught dealing with dynamited fish, should also be liable for prosecution, get stiff fines and jail time as well as having their *Fish Dealing Licenses* cancelled permanently.

4) Any **Fisheries Officers** caught colluding with dynamiters should get, not only dismissed from duty, but get jail time as well.

5) The system of catching the dynamiters in terms of **Evidence needed** for courts should be changed.

As it is now, it seems that you have to catch them with the dynamite or in the act of blasting to prosecute them. This will never work because the dynamiters are informed when patrols are out so, either they do not blast; or as soon as they see a patrol boat approaching, they throw the dynamite over the side, so the evidence is gone.

6) Boats are easily recognized, so **Pictures and Videos** taken should be used as evidence for the boat to be caught. Quite frequently these guys blast in front of other local boats and sport-

fishermen so it is enough someone gets photos or video then the boat and engine can be used as evidence and the boats seized and destroyed.

7) **Patrols** should go out on local style boats such as a **Ngwanda**, powered by outboards and they should have a couple of **local fishermen** with them so they look authentic and not so obvious. They should carry cameras and videos so they can film/photo the bomb boats.

This way they can observe many dynamite boats at once, gather enough evidence then seize the whole bunch later once they get into port.

8) It is important to seize the boat and engine and destroy these immediately so even should the dynamiters escape they will be without a boat and engine which will take a while for them to try and get again.

9) Patrols should be well **armed** and used to dealing with violent criminals since these dynamiters are criminals, poachers and they know they are breaking the law so they will react with violence if they find themselves cornered.

They are quite capable of throwing dynamite at you and trying to blow up your boat so the officers on patrol should be careful and armed in case they need to shoot.

10) An easy and safe way is the patrol boat (ngwanda) observes them, collects evidence with pics and videos and once they have collected enough evidences, from a distance they **destroy the engines** so the dynamiters have no means for moving and attacking the patrol or escaping.

11) Officers who carry out these patrols should be part of a **Special Task Force that is separate from the main Fisheries** since this would lessen the chances of information getting out to the people who are informing the dynamiters when patrols go out and what plans they have.

12) A **Network of informers** should be established at the market and among local and sport-fishermen, to give information to the *Task Force* when the dynamiters are out and about so they can leave and try to catch them in the act.

13) Patrols should go out from different areas, **NOT the main port**, since this is the main place where the dynamiters have their informers that warn them.

A suggestion would be to put a patrol boat at **Msasani**.

The DYC is willing to help out with mooring, keeping the boat ready, etc..

If there is a patrol boat stationed there and since boating members frequently see dynamiters blasting away they can inform and direct the Patrol Boats out.

14) Since dynamite boats are easy to recognize and the **equipment they carry is quite** specialized for their work they are easy to catch when they return to port.

A suggestion would be to place a small disguised patrol boat, or a group of **Undercover Officers** on the beach, to catch these guys, when they return to offload their catch.

Any small boat with outboard motor (ngwanda or mtumbui – NOT a sailing ngalawa) and divers with scuba gear is most likely a bomb boat.

It is enough these boats are stopped and their catches checked, if they have reef fish they will clearly show they have been dynamited (broken back bone, very floppy and soft meat, ruptured insides)

15) If the boats have large amounts of Tuna or other pelagic fish and scuba gear they are **DEFENITELY** dynamiters because the scuba gear is used to collect the fish after the blast and there is no other way they could catch tuna with scuba diving gear only.

These small boats are not capable of carrying large driftnets which is the only other way they could catch big numbers of pelagic fish and any long range hand line boat (which could also have big catches) would have big ice boxes on board (the fish would be several days old on ice), and a lot of fishing gear would be present on the boat..

16) Another way to slow down dynamite fishing is to say **NO ONE is allowed to fish with Scuba Gear (diving tanks).**

If they do not have their diving gear it becomes very ineffective to dynamite Tuna, etc.. Since they would hardly recover any fish, making it very expensive

The only fishermen using tanks to fish with, are either lobster fishermen (I think the use of tanks in lobster fishing is illegal anyway??) or divers collecting sea cucumbers, which is illegal as well ??, or dynamite fishermen, so by restricting the use of scuba gear in fishing you will be stopping a lot of illegal fishing and should you catch a boat with diving gear and fish, they are automatically treated as dynamiters fishermen.

17) Another solution would be to try and **target the supply of dynamite** and charges. If the suppliers are caught then this would effectively shut down the dynamite fisheries.

A big source of dynamite is coming from the cement factory at Wazo Hill. This dynamite is obviously stolen from the stores or quarries and sold to the fishermen

Another source of explosives for bomb boats is military explosives being stolen from the Army and being sold to the fishermen.

18) The dynamiters mostly all use diving tanks so to identify them, officers could watch the areas where tanks are being filled up with air.

I have it on good information the main compressor used for filling these diving tanks for dynamiters at the Ferry is situated behind the fishing shop at the main Fish Market in the small work shop storage area. Apparently it costs 500 Tshs to fill up one tank.

19) To try and target the fish buyers/dealers who are buying and re-selling the dynamited fish.

If these guys are caught and charged, then the dynamiters would lose their market and this will restrict their activities. They then would be forced to sell their fish at the Auction where it would be easier to catch them.

I hope this information is useful

Regards